THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the Sabha.

Use of discretionary quota of STD/ISD booths at railway stations

3020. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have imposed a ban on the discretionary quota for the ministers;

(b) if so, the number of times the Railway Minister has exercised his option for discretionary quota in regard to allotment of STD/ISD booths and other stalls on Railway Stations; and

(c) the ceiteria, norms and the policy being followed by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) The Government have issued directives to formulate rules and guidelines for out of turn allotment.

(b) and (c) As per the extant policy, allotment of space for installation of STD/ISD/PCO Booth is allotted only to physically handicapped persons who are handicapped to the extent of 40% and above. Amongst them, perference is given to SC,ST and weaker sections of the society. Applications are called for as and when need is felt by the railway. Orders have been issued from the Ministry of Railways for allotment of space for seeting up of STD/ISD/PCO Booth in one case as a special case since June' 96. No special allotment of catering/vending stalls has been made by the Ministry since June'96.

Selling of Nonpatented Genetic Resources

3021. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister for ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state-

(a) whether Government are regulating the trade in biological material as per the norms of the Convention on Biological diversity;

(b) whether a USA based company has been allowed to import tissue culture developed medical and aromatic plants in test tube from India; and

(c) the reasons for selling out genetic resources without patenting the plants first?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) The Government is actively considering an enforceable instrument for regulating the transfer of biological material from the country in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Clearance of Floating Hotel Project In Mumbai

3022. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have cleared the floating hotel project in Mumbai; and

(b) if so, how do Government propose to ensure that the construction of hotel-cum-commercial complex will not flout Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS: (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) The Government has not accorded environmental clearance to the project.

(b) Does not arise.